2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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we dammed the stream and made a pool and a mound. And we put him on a rock, and on top of him we put cowhide shields and left them so. And we put firewood above. Then Ngwazi Ngozo took fire and lit that fire. Then *ligubo* was danced and the women were singing. They sang songs of *ligubo* and the *amadoda* danced (*anagiya*). The owner of the country did not cry, no, and the big people did not cry. Only the wives and other women cried.

Habuya Dube added later that everyone came with one piece of wood and put it on the pyre; and that they killed a cow and took the fat and put it on the wood, and used the skin to wrap the body in.

In discussing the ceremony of cremation with informants among the central Ngoni, there was no reference to the suggestion made by Dr. Kuper, that cremating was a substitute for embalming to avoid the corruption of the body of the king. They regarded the act of burning as an essential element in the continuing strength of the royal line, since the heir stood in the smoke from the pyre, and in the continuing fertility and strength of the country, since the ashes were swept into the river. The concept was that the royal ruler had been strengthened with the *tonga* medicine, and thereafter his body and its strength was the symbol of the unity and strength and fertility of his country.

On the question of mourning or no mourning they were equally emphatic. 'Death cannot cut life' was an expression often on their lips during the funeral ceremonies of Bambo Manga, when great care was taken to carry out the traditional ritual as far as possible in every detail. They were shocked at the idea of mourning and wailing at such a time by any of the big people. The leading Ngoni women were expected to join the *ligubo* dances in the courtyard. Some old women of lower social rank in the village, together with the daughter of Bambo Manga, sat in the house with the corpse sobbing and crying '*Mayi, mayi*' and many of them became quite ill and others hysterical with prolonged sobbing. The leading Ngoni men were contemptuous of this display of grief. They admitted it was correct behaviour for her daughter because of the close kinship tie, but of the behaviour of the rest they said 'Ha, just like the Ntumba people.' The only behaviour which was considered correct was to dance in the courtyard openly before the house of Bambo Manga, or to slip off quietly home and rest before returning to take up the dance.

The traditional ritual procedure at the death of the Paramount, with the exception of the cremation of the corpse, I saw in all its details at the death of Bambo Manga. The corpse was placed in the same position in the hut as described at Cikusi's death, and was wrapped in a sheep-skin first with a cow-skin over, the spleen, gall-bladder and fat decorating the head and neck. The dancing of *ligubo* by the men with shields and spears, and by the women, was continuous from the moment of death to the burial, and afterwards whenever fresh companies from the central

764 184 burned immediately after the burial on the banks of the stream where the living performed their ritual washing. Small children who were related to the dead took charcoal in their hands, and walked up to the grave backwards and threw the charcoal in without looking. Some leaders of the Swazi clans were buried on the edge of the kraal of the house to which they belonged, and the fence was enlarged to include the grave. The Ngoni comment on this place of burial was: 'If we make a grave, we make it outside the kraal, and afterwards build the kraal round that place so that cattle may walk over it and lie on it. Thus it may become flat as if it were nothing, for Ngoni people do not want a grave to [765] be seen from the outside.' The women who were near relatives of the dead were allowed to mourn in the hut where the person had died, or they could if they chose take part in the war-songs and dances which were the only form of mourning allowed to the male relatives and to the men and women of the village who were not closely related to the dead person. The usual procedure was for a group of older women to wail and sob in the hut, but for all the rest, men and women, to mourn in the Ngoni way by taking part in war-dances and songs.

764 182 Much of this ritual appears to have had as its purpose to remove the fear of death from the living. That was the explanation of why the children threw charcoal in the grave—that they should not remember with fear the dead person being put in the earth. The obliteration of the grave site on the edge of the kraal had a dual purpose. One has been already referred to—that the grave should not be seen. The other was to identify the grave of a leading man or woman with the kraal site and the cattle herded there. If the village moved and a new kraal was set up, people would still say 'X was buried here', adding 'He was buried here when we were on Domwe—or in Songea', referring to an earlier site of the village. Placing the corpse facing south-east, and singing Ngoni war-songs which had come from the south, linked the newly dead with the ancestral dead, and emphasized the chain of communication between the living and the dead, which a new ancestral spirit could help to forge. It was establishing this means of communication which was the dominant note in the ritual of the funeral and in the post-burial rites.

When a death took place, the first action taken after the corpse had been prepared and wrapped in a skin was to send out a summons to come and mourn. We saw in the chapter on the Paramount that at his death the summons was in the formula 'The skies have fallen.' For others the announcement was: [illegible] and so has died. Come and mourn.' The [765] obligation to mourn was [illegible]ing. If relatives and fellow clansmen could not come at the time of the burial, or were away in the south, one of their first duties on returning to their home village was to go and mourn by the kraal where the dead person was buried. This was intended partly to show sympathy for the bereaved, but also to acknowledge and salute a new ancestral spirit, and to demonstrate the re-integration of

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the group of those living relatives who had performed or were about to perform certain rites for the newly dead.

These rites were the stages of mourning laid down in the Ngoni funeral ritual. They were stages in which all adults took part, and they fulfilled the need to build up the future links with the spirit who had joined the ancestors and to bring together in common acts those from whom death had removed one of their number. The following text by one of the leaders of a Swazi clan in the central kingdom puts together briefly the successive stages of shaving, drinking beer, eating meat, singing war-songs, ritual cleansing and widow inheritance, and bringing back the spirit.

"If a man died, the second day they shave; after 5 or 6 months they shave again and cook beer. This means the widows must take off their white *sitambo* (head bands). After 12 months they take off their black *sitambo* and kill a beast to praise the spirit so that he may return to his house. This is also the time for inheriting the widows.

When they take off the white *sitambo*, the brother of the one who died takes sheep dung and sprinkles it in the houses where the widows are sleeping. At the same time the men wash their hands with cattle dung. The meaning of this is to tell the widows to cook food for the brothers of the dead man to send to them when they sit by the kraal. This they do before they can see them.

From the ritual witnessed at many funeral ceremonies, which never altered in its main elements, and from discussions with Ngoni informants, it was possible to gain some idea of Ngoni beliefs about the relation between the living and the dead. It was clear that the attitude of the living towards the dead was one of respect and honour, but not predominantly one of avoidance and fear as among some of the neighbouring tribes. The post-burial ritual culminated in 'bringing back the spirit' to the village, and we shall examine this further in the last chapter of this section. An observer was always conscious of a sense that people were waiting for the return of the spirit, which had to be planned for and carried out by the living. During the interval between the death and bringing back the spirit, it was said to be 'in the bush'. When asked where in fact the spirit was, the answer was always 'We do not know. How can we know?' They admitted that the life of the spirits was unknown to them, and there was evidence of a slightly uneasy relationship during this interval of waiting. When the spirit had been brought back and was being guarded by some woman appointed for that purpose, then it was once more near to the living and their cattle, and it could be addressed correctly. In the absence of any clear concepts about life in a spirit world, the Ngoni clung to the ritual by which they believed they could establish and maintain contact of a safe and respectful nature between the living and the dead. 769 775

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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Cattle in the ancestor cult

The Ngoni, unlike the Swazi as described by Dr. Kuper,[1] had no clear ideas about the life after death as lived by their immediate ancestors with whom they had associated in their lifetime. They did not, as the Swazi did, picture them living somewhere surrounded with cattle and other familiar creatures and objects. The importance of bringing the spirit back (*ukubuyisa idlozi*) to the house where it would be cared for signified two main things for them. The first was the continuous association of the spirit of the dead with the living persons in the community to which he had belonged, through the individuals belonging to the house, the actual hut where the sacrificial vessels were kept, and the cattle which belonged to the house. The other significant point was that contact with the returned spirit, and through him with the spirits of more remote ancestors, could only be established in the village containing the cattle of the house to which the dead man had belonged.

We shall be examining some aspects of the ritual of addressing the ancestral spirits in a later chapter of this section. Here we shall establish three constituent parts of the ancestor cult in which cattle were [illegible]al links between those taking part in the cult and the spirits whom [illegible]ney addressed.

The first part was the group of ceremonies which took place at death, at the burial, at the first ritual shaving and at bringing back the spirit. A text by Lopati Nzunga (see Chapter IV, p. 200) illustrates how three parts of a beast—the skin, the kidney fat (*nseso*) and the gall bladder (*nyongo*)—were considered essential for Ngoni burial. It was interesting to find in Blantyre among educated Ngoni who were Christians and occupied clerical and commercial posts, that they had given up the cow-skin for wrapping the corpse and substituted a coffin. But they admitted confidentially that in most Ngoni funerals the use of the *nseso* and the *nyongo* was customary. After the burial the ritual shaving, shared in by all who attended the funeral, was accompanied by the killing of a beast and the consumption of its meat, though with no ritual significance beyond its association with the purification of the mourners and their integration as a group. From six to twelve months later the second shaving and the bringing back of the spirit was also accompanied by killing a beast and eating its meat. These ceremonies expressed the sense of loss felt for the human person who had died, the sorrow of the mourners, their successive acts of purification which served to bring them together, and the final bringing of the spirit to live among them again. As we have seen, each stage of the death and mourning rites was accompanied by the eating of a beast or the use of certain parts of a beast. The cattle of the house to which the dead person belonged were used to bury him or her, to strengthen the mourners, and to reintegrate the spirit with the living community.

[1] Kuper, H. *An African Aristocracy*, p. 186.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

769 too closely because of the still bitter feeling against Europeans for having caused the Paramount's death. It was quite clear, however, that since this essential step in the recognition of an ancestral spirit had been omitted at the time of his death, it was considered important to make good the omission, and the 'opening' of the grave appeared as the logical occasion.

● 765 In Mcakhatha village I witnessed a ritual second shaving for a man
769 of the Nzunga clan, a son of the former chief, Njolomole I. This man had been absent from the village for many years, having left as a young man still living in the *laweni*, and his death in the south was reported by letter from a fellow villager to his relatives in the village. When the letter was received, a diviner was consulted and he advised a sacrifice to the spirits. The first ritual shaving of all members of the Nzunga clan and their affines took place as it would have done on the day after burial if he had died in the village, and a beast was killed and the meat offered to the spirits and ritually eaten. The women of the Nzunga clan and the wives and widows of Nzunga men put on *xitambo* or mourning caps. Six months later the diviner was consulted again, and a day was fixed for the second shaving 'to bring back the spirit'. The spirits of the Nzunga clan were addressed, the beast selected for the sacrifice urinated, the spirits 'agreed', and the shaving of the Nzunga clan members and [302] their affines took place; this time the whole head was shaved whereas the first shaving was only a small patch on the temple. The men were shaved by the kraal, the women near the hut of the dead man's mother which was uninhabited. The women who were relatives or affines of the deceased took off their *xitambo* and unravelled the threads of which the caps were made, collecting in front of each a little heap of hair and thread. Then one of the leading women got up and said '*Tiyeni* (Let us go)', and the women went in procession to the stream, each carrying her little handful of hair and thread. As they passed they pulled a handful of dry grass from the roof of the hut by which they had been sitting to start their fires. By the stream each of the former mourners, eleven in all, made a fire of grass and dried leaves lit from a bunch of smouldering grass carried by one of them, put on it the threads and hair and tended the fire until only ashes were left. All these eleven women stood erect behind their fires facing the stream, except when bending down to fan the flames. When the fires died down each woman swept the ashes into the stream with her hand and splashed water on the site of the fire until no trace was left, lifting overhanging branches to leave a free passage for the ashes on to the water. The leading widow, a descendant of NaNdumbu, the famous woman diviner of Mputa's day, took a look round to see if all traces of the fires had gone, said 'We have finished', and led the way to the washing pool where all the women washed their clothes and their bodies. Meantime the men had been to wash in the stream on the other side of the village and had also burned their hair

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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by the stream and swept the ashes into the water. The beast for the sacrifice had been killed early in the morning before the shaving, and the ritual eating of the meat took place. This second shaving and sacrifice were to end the mourning period and to bring back the spirit to the village. A widow of Chief Njolomole I was appointed to guard the spirit and she kept in her hut the baskets which had been used for the sacrifice.

When asked whether this ritual of bringing back the spirit was followed for everyone who died away from home, the answer was 'No. It was done for this man because he was a big one and he was the son of a chief.' Only for members of leading Swazi clans and some others of trans-Zambesi origin was the ritual invariably followed of recalling the spirit to the village where he had lived and where the clan sacrifices were performed with the cattle of the man's house. The ritual ensured that a new ancestor spirit was recognized, that provision could be made for its guardianship, and that the spirit had been brought back to the village even though the man had died and been buried elsewhere. The ritual was based, not on the assumption that the spirit would be angry if not so treated and might injure his living descendants, but on the belief that absence had weakened the bonds between members of the clan and the house, and that the ritual associated with the making of an ancestor spirit gave an opportunity for strengthening these bonds. This was achieved by bringing together the living to commemorate the dead; by repeating once again the traditional pattern of speaking to the ancestors through the cattle; by giving the spirits their meat which the living shared; and by making sure that the spirit of the dead man would henceforth be taken care of by an appointed guardian.

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In the case of important people of the royal clan and chiefs, the second shaving was a preliminary to bringing back the spirit to be taken care of permanently and there were two stages to this last ritual in the making of an ancestral spirit. Three months after the death of Bambo Manga there was an elaborate ceremony of the second shaving which was accompanied by brewing vast amounts of beer. On this occasion there was an offering of beer, not meat, to the ancestral spirits. The ritual began with consulting the diviner first about whether the beer would be good. The diviner reported that two quarrelling women were spoiling it, and the quarrel would have to be resolved before the brewing would be successful. The diviner was also asked which spirit should be offered beer on this occasion, and answered that NaQwana, the mother of Mputa and grandmother of Bambo Manga, was the one to be addressed. The next act was making the ritual fire, since all the beer had to be cooked on newly made fires. Lopati Nzunga took the ritual fire-stick from Bambo Manga's hut, two young men kindled a fire outside and the women took grass from Bambo Manga's fence to build a fire. The women picked up bits of this fire to kindle their own new fires before brewing the beer.

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3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
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accident. These visits and expressions of sympathy could not be omitted without grave social disapproval. If a young man or woman was absent from the village at the time of death or loss, their first duty on returning was to go and express sympathy with the sufferer. To assist in these condolences so that the speaker and the hearer would readily understand each other, proverbs were used such as: 'If the pot is broken it is broken indeed,' and, 'When water is poured out it cannot be gathered up.' The Ngoni disliked the noisy and unrestrained forms of mourning which they saw among the people round them. To them the quiet visit and the note of resignation in the proverbs used fully conveyed the sympathy they wished to express.

All through the later stages of training children and young adults the importance of speaking well was emphasized. This at first referred to correct language and being audible but not noisy. Later, as we saw in Chapter VII, the art of speech was held up as a Ngoni characteristic, and many proverbs brought this out in ordinary conversation as well as on more formal occasions such as giving evidence in the courts. When a group of people, generally women, kept up a continuous meaningless chatter, onlookers, generally men, shrugged their shoulders and said, 'They are preparing meat without salt.' When a person talked on and on about a matter which was being discussed without getting to the point, impatient listeners, or the councillor in the law courts said: 'Your wisdom is like mushrooms which come after the cooking is finished,' or, more scathingly, 'You are the feet of a centipede' which wander aimlessly with many steps but no direction. Proverbs were not always a form of rebuke; they could also be a commendation. When a person brought out clearly the point of an argument the listeners said, 'You have rung a little bell'; and when after a prolonged discussion or the hearing of a case in the courts the audience accepted a decision as conclusive and just, they said, 'The upper and the lower teeth meet together.'

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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will die. The child is in danger from the illness known as *mdulo* throughout the period from birth until the resumption of intercourse between its parents. It is not until after this ceremony, known as 'taking up the child' [23] that the mystical link between man, wife, and child is broken and the man free to commit adultery without mystical retribution. Thus while there are definite rights and obligations between husband and wife which can be enforced in the courts or are susceptible to the pressure of public opinion there are also in the critical situations of pregnancy and childbirth other mystical forces operating which unite the couple to a greater extent than at any other time. To a lesser extent the same principle operates when a woman menstruates. Her husband is in danger from her menstrual blood. She may not lie on the same mat with him and if he has a bed she must lie on the floor. If he has intercourse with her while she is menstruating he will contract an illness called *lugola* [24] whose symptoms are a very black face, nasal discharge, and continual feeling of cold. After death a man's widows are in danger of *mdulo* if they commit adultery during the first month of mourning.

We see then that the relationship between a man and his wife is partly defined in legal terms, with mutual duties and rights that are enforceable in the courts. This relationship is documentated and validated by the transfer of money and cattle from one group to the other and by the performance of the various marriage ceremonies. Because of the relationship between them, man and wife live together, sleep together, eat together and work together. But above all, together they produce and rear children. It is primarily because of these children that the kin of man and wife are concerned in the marriage relationship. It is during the long process of producing children that the two spouses are most closely associated with each other, and actions of the one in some mystical way directly and automatically influence the well-being of the other.

When a marriage grows out of flirtation between a young man and a young woman, there is at first sexual attraction between them. With the passage of time this may give place to a broader sentiment of mutual affection and respect. To this extent we may say that man and wife come to love each other. But whereas young men frequently discuss with other men the attraction they experience towards women, unmarried or married, they do not do this when they have settled down and begun to acquire prestige in the community. A man may quarrel with his wife in public, but he never expresses his affection for her, save in the intimacies of the hut. Men and women mourn their spouses with great lamentation at funerals, but while this may sometimes be the expression of a personal

[23] *Kutola mwana*. Cf. *kubenga mwana* among the Cewa.

[24] Cf. Read, op. cit., 'The moral code . . .', p. 19, where she describes a medicine called *ugola* with which men doctored their wives so that their lovers would die of a wasting sickness. Also cf. Zulu *ulugola*.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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sorrow, it is not necessarily always so, for loud wailing and tears are appropriate at the death of all neighbours and kinsfolk, whether friends or enemies. Men do not usually seek the companionship of their wives at dances and beer parties, although there are some men who do. In our own society we think of a man earning his living in company with other men, but spending his leisure with his wife. By contrast Ngoni men work in the gardens with their wives but seek other company for recreation.

7. Divorce

The relationship between husband and wife can be terminated by death or by divorce. If one spouse dies, then his or her interest in the marriage is guarded by the surviving kinsfolk, and we shall deal with their actions in our next chapter as part of the intervention of affines in a marriage. In divorce, however, except in cases of desertion, both husband and wife are themselves involved and it is primarily by their own actions, rather than by the actions of their kinsmen, that the marriage is terminated.

While a marriage is established without reference to the Ngoni state organization, except in so far as the issue of a marriage certificate is concerned, divorce more frequently involves resort to the Native courts. It is possible to effect divorce without taking the matter to the court, and in the past, before the growth of the Native Authority bureaucracy had begun, many people were divorced in the village. Kinsfolk of the two parties meet together in the village of one or other party, discuss the marriage, and agree among themselves that the couple are to be divorced. The formal act of divorce is made by the couple shaking hands with each other, while those present tell them to stop hating each other. The woman is told 'If this man comes as a traveller to your house, and asks for water, do not refuse him'.

It is more usual for a divorce to be referred to the court. Attempts are made by the kinsfolk to resolve the quarrel, if quarrel there is, and when the attempts fail, the group seeking the divorce or hoping to get damages from the other side take the matter to the county Native Court. It is open to either the man or the woman to take the initiative in this matter. The court hears the case, awards damages as appropriate, and, if it thinks fit, declares the couple divorced. The formal act of shaking hands is sometimes performed in court, but is then dispensed with.

Divorce takes place in the village only when there is substantial agreement on both sides that it would be a mistake to allow the marriage to continue. The meeting of kinsfolk in the village may reach agreement about the return of the legalization payment or even the award of damages, but it is only the court that has power to enforce decisions of this kind, and it is to the court that disputants turn when they cannot agree. When a man wishes to divorce his wife on the ground of her adultery he usually does so through the

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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and widows are subject to the same restrictions
and wear the same signs of mourning whether or not their deceased husbands made any payments. The absence of payments does not automatically deny to a man and woman the status of husband and wife any more than the completed payments automatically ensure marital happiness.

As reflected in Table XII, the proportion of marriages in which no payments are offered has decreased in the last twelve years, ans we know from Table VIII that this is due to an increase in the number of marriages in which the legalization payment is made. It is therefore possible in future there will be a clearer division between marriage, with its legalization payment, and concubinage, with no such payment and with a completely different relationship between the sexual partners and between their respective groups of relatives. We are not in this paper concerned specifically with concubinage and prostitution, but it may at this point be useful to point out that not many women are concubines. In our sample, as set out in Table IV, there was only one concubine, a wedded woman, among 223 wedded women. From Table III, we see that there were no men at all, in our sample of 116 wedded men, living with concubines. The paramour of the concubine in our sample was resident on a nearby farm, and so did not come into the sample of men.

4. Co-operation between affines

The payments and ceremonies of marriages are isolated and memorable events. The ceremonies are public in that neighbours

Table XII. Incidence of marriage without payment, by decades

Marriage payment	Date of marriage									
	1878–87	1888–97	1898–1907	1908–17	1918–27	1928–37	1938–47	1948–9	Not known	Total
At least one payment offered	1	6	17	37	38	34	86	14	5	238
None offered ..	–	7	11	19	26	24	29	3	3	122
Ratio of marriages without offer of payment to total	0%	54%	39%	34%	41%	41%	25%	18%	—	34%
Not known if any payments offered	1	3	6	6	12	11	18	7	2	66
Grand total ..	2	16	34	62	76	69	133	24	10	426

Informants as in Table VIII

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he has not been brought up by them but by some other relative. In particular a man is reluctant to discuss his affairs directly with his father if he can get his eldest brother to act as his intermediary. The eldest brother is heir to their father and it is considered that he should act as the channel by which the father is approached. He deals with proposals of marriage arising from his younger siblings and if he approves of them, he refers the matter to their father. This pattern of relations seems most marked in aristocratic families.

9. Widows

While it is a man's eldest brother who helps to arrange his marriage, it is his younger brothers who become pro-husbands to his widows. We have seen that in the old days a widow was usually looked after by a younger brother of the dead man but she continued to live in her dead husband's segment, and the children she bore by her pro-husband were grouped with the children of the dead man. This can still happen but it is no longer the invariable rule. As in the old days, if bridewealth has been paid by the first husband and after his death his widow goes to live with someone else, the second husband or pro-husband cannot offer bridewealth and the children he begets belong to the dead husband and take his descent name.

Some indication of the extent to which widows remain with their dead husbands' kin is given by data collected in two villages. All the women now living in these villages had between them experienced widowhood 31 times. In two instances (6 per cent) the widow had been cared for by her dead husband's brother; and in 11 instances (35 per cent) the widow took a new husband not directly related to the dead man. In the remaining 18 instances (58 per cent) the widow had not married again and was living alone.

A man may die at any stage of his marriage. If he is betrothed to a girl and then dies, the betrothal passes to a younger brother. When the girl is old enough, the younger brother marries her as though she had been betrothed to him in the first place and the children he has by her are his own children. Similarly, if a betrothed girl dies before she is married, the betrothal passes to a younger sister.

If a man dies after he has been properly married his widows have definite roles to play. For a month after his death, they must wear the signs of mourning, and they are in danger of *mdulo*[34] if they commit adultery during that time. They must be ready to wail when distant visitors arrive to mourn. At the end of a month they brew beer, and there is a joyous party. A year after the death there is another party, and the fate of the widows is discussed. If none of the younger brothers or kinsmen of the dead man wish to look after the widows, they are free to go their own way, and there may be a formal statement of divorce. They are in any case now spoken

[34] See above, p. 46.

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

764 and take a large flat stone and set the corpse on it, and take a millstone and place it on his head. If it be he has children, they are made to take charcoal in their hands, and this they cast into the grave (this is to cause them to forget). Then some old man takes up a hoe, and strikes the ground at one side of the grave and again at the other, when many begin to fill in the earth, the chief mourners trampling it down.

III. When they have finished filling in, they knock out the hoe heads, and set off for the stream. They who carry the hoes and household belongings of the deceased go first. When they reach the water, the chief mourners bathe first, then every one else; the men bathe up-stream, the women down-stream. They do not rub each other's backs. When
768 they have finished bathing, they take the calico, sporran, and "*nsengwa*" baskets the dead man used to eat out of, and set fire to them, and splash the ashes with water. Then they set out for the village, wailing. When they come to the grave, the medicine man looks for medicine to remove the evil
[765] influence of the spirit of the dead; [this medicine] he breaks up, puts in a potsherd, pours on water, and stirs. The chief mourner begins to rub it on his
• 765 legs, face, and hands, then others come and do the same. If the deceased had children of his own, they also rub some of the medicine on. They again keep wake at the hut in which the man died. Next morning at dawn the nearest relation of the dead
[431] takes goats and fowls and gives them to the chief mourners, who then begin to shave a little patch of hair from the side of each person's head, when the people will then shave each other quite bald. The widows go to some spot in the bush to weave the "red" bands and to shave. When every one has quite finished shaving, the meat is taken from the

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

fire and divided out. They again sleep at the hut of the deceased. Next morning they begin to lift away any refuse. The chief mourners do this, throwing away the stuff at the cross-roads [where they set fire to them]. And then the people disperse. 765 ●

IV. The widows live in the hut where the man died; they get up night and morning to go and utter their laments in the bush; if they meet any one, they cover their head with their calico. The chief mourners and the elders of the village now leave off cohabiting with their wives. When perhaps a month has passed, the elders make preparations for soaking the grain for beer. Previous to boiling the beer, they go to the village oracle to consult him, saying, "We are putting the beer-pots on the fire, and we are not sure if it will be successfully made with no hitch, and whether or not the people will quarrel." Then the oracle may say none of these evils will happen, telling them "the beer will be successfully made." Then they also ask, saying, "Who is she who is to set the beer on the fire?" And then the oracle consults the lots, and says, "But she of so and so's clan, it is she who shall set the beer on the fire." Next morning the beer is set on the fire, the following day it still boils, on the third day it stands off the fire, on the fourth the malt is put in. (In making beer not connected with any mourning, should it not ferment, it is allowed to stand over another day, but mourning beer, even should it not ferment well, they just go on boiling it.) On that day they summon the dance, and every one is told that the beer is ready on that evening. Then all the people collect and begin to dance. They beg some beer for "kindling the fire," and some to "pour on the drums." When they have danced some time an old man comes forth and

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6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

765 273 commands silence, saying, "You have all met together here, look well to what I say. We are a people in affliction, let no one stir up discord; he who has adultery in his heart let him not commit it here, but at his own village." When it is dawn, some more beer, [called] the "bather of the eyes," is brought out. When the sun begins to get hot, all the chief mourners assemble, and a pot of beer, called the "shaving beer," is produced, and some [303] is poured into a potsherd and used like water (for shaving), that the chief mourners may use it for shaving a small patch from each person's head, and when this is done, one shaves his companion. The womenfolk shave at the hut of the deceased. The widows alone shave their heads somewhere in the bush, and remove the "red" head-bands, and put on new ones, smeared with oil, and go to the water to bathe. Should there still be some beer remaining they again pass the night dancing, that it may be quickly finished, so that the villagers may resume cohabitation with their wives. The widows no longer go to the bush to lament, and they are privileged to commit adultery, provided they remove the head-bands.

V. When they have passed another month, they then begin to hurry on the women, saying, "Now you must make haste with the malt." This beer is that for "bringing back the spirit," and for "knocking down the deceased's hut." When it is 765 ready they put it in a new hut that has been built *beside the one the man died in*. The elders then meet together in the hut, and one speaks as follows [to the spirit], "This is your new abode, these children you must guard from harm, and not, when they are walking, cause to fall over a snag; should you wish to ask for anything send the (harmless) *mshawa* snake, or the lizard, or the chameleon, and

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

when they see these they will consult the village lots, and the oracle will tell them it is the spirit of their relation who is asking for beer." And when the beer is finished they honour (use *kuonga*) him by saying, "Hail to him of so and so's clan-animal name." Then the chief mourners commence to pull down the hut in which the man died, and when they have done so they take water and wash their hands. Then they take a little pot and dig a hole at the hut door (they have just demolished), and put the pot in, and fill in the earth, the rim only of the pot being visible, and they knock a hole in the bottom of the pot, and they take beer and pour it into the pot, and it goes right through into the ground; and they take a potsherd and cover over the pot, and over that place the old grass door, and pin down the door with a bamboo stick, and take a gourd-cup, and having broken the handle, hang it on the bamboo. When they have done all this they bring out the beer of the chief mourners and dance, perhaps the *Chitoto* dance.

VI. On that day the widows may again meet face to face with men. For another year they hoe by themselves, and then some old person comes to speak to them, saying, "The mourning is now long past, get some malt, and look out for another husband (use *kugana*); when water gets spilt (people) do not pick it up." And then they begin to hurry on the beer, and when it is ready all the chief mourners (and all who took part in the funeral) come and spend the night dancing. The widows get up early in the morning, and take a gourd of beer and go with it to the stream, and take off their bands, and set fire to them and quench the fire with the beer. Then the elders say, "Come, let us take the widows, who are now eligible for marriage again." And they tell some very old women to go to the *Kuka*

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hut and tell the women that so and so is wishing to marry them, and take the place of him who died. At first the women refuse, saying, "We do not want (to marry again) but to go on mourning," and the old women go off and tell the men, who are congregated at the village court. The men say, "Oh, that is what they say, is it?" and they take their knobkerries and give them to the old women, who go off again to the women and produce the knobkerries. Say they, "This is so and so's, this so and so's." And the women take the one of him they wish to marry. When they have received the stick, the old women come out again to say, "She, who is now an eligible widow, wants so and so." And he, the man, then sends some one to bring out the beer from the hut [where the women are]. The man whom she loves then goes off to the medicine man to get medicine, and takes that for which the medicine is pounded. And the doctor gives him it, saying, "But go and bathe your former wife (or wives), before you enter the hut of her who is a widow." And he takes the medicine, and goes and gives it to his former wife, saying, "There is medicine, you must go and bathe." And he goes to the hut of his new wife, and takes a potsherd and sets it on the fire near the doorway. When it gets hot he pours in some water, and then some of the medicine. Then the man takes some of the mixture, puts his fingers to his lips, and smears his knees with it. Then the woman does the same. Some other medicine is in a pot. The woman stirs it round with a stick which has a little piece of wood fastened to one end, which she revolves in the hands (as if making fire); this pot she then lifts, and goes with it to where cross-roads meet, and here the man bathes, and then the woman. In the evening they take a hen and put it at one end of

6:Rattray E,G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

the hut "towards the feet," and then they sleep together. Next morning a relation of the man who died comes and takes away the fowl, going with it to the house of the man's mother. The spirit follows the fowl. When the man has lived some time with the woman, and if he does not get on with her, he just leaves her, and his companions say, "He only went to get his bows." If the woman wants to marry any one else she can do so, without any further medicine.

III

THE FUNERAL OF AN ANGONI CHIEF

I. When the chief of the whole country dies, they do not immediately inform the people of his own village. First they send messengers to other villages, to tell them "the clouds have fallen to-day." They do this because they fear, "if we tell his own men first, they may go and commence to forage and plunder, as is done at a chief's death." Then all begin to assemble, all the war bands from the different villages, shields in hand. They are decked out in their feather head-dresses, and wristlets and anklets of goat's hair; (the bands) glitter *as if it were all for show and not for a funeral.* Then some of the old men dress the dead chief for burial. The knees are bent against the chest, and the arms bent, the hands are laid against the cheeks, and they take a small gourd-cup, and make him grasp it in his hand. When they bathe him, they take grass from a forest glade. They do not

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"Wage war on the *Afo*,
Hayo, hayo ho,
They have left him;
They have left him in their midst."

"*Humba*, the mighty medicine man, has gone with them,
He has swallowed a magic horn, has *Humba*."

766 The shield of the chief, which he was wont to carry (*kugwira*), they burn on a fire at one side, and all his household belongings. When the fire has burned out, and the corpse also is consumed and turned to ashes, water is splashed over (the spot). Should the stream have been dammed they pull down the barrier, and all the ashes go down the *Mawi* (a river). When they see all is finished a sheep is killed, they take a wooden spoon and catch the blood and place it on the rock. Then they skin the sheep, cut it open, take the stomach, turn out the contents on the rock, and smear it over. The elders only eat the meat. When they have done this they go off to the village and kill many oxen, the people [231] still keeping up the rolling sound with their shields. All the ornamental tufts of grass from the hut roofs belonging to the chief are removed.

765 766 IV. Next morning all the headmen shave their heads, and then the people from the different villages. The widows put on the red head-bands. Then they allow three days to pass, and on the fourth every one assembles and the new chief stands at the village court on one leg. One old man steps 643 out and says, "Do you hear, your new chief is so and so" (naming him by his clan-animal name). Then every one shouts, "Hail," and the thunder of their shields is heard, and all around is a mass of waving plumes (trans. *biriwiri*). Then the elders

The final day of the proceedings, *tsiku la kumwa*, is known as *tsiku la kumeta maliro*. The beer is tasted at cockcrow, and *kusipa maliro* begins to dance, followed first by a *chisudzo* and then by *mdondo*. At sunrise the dancers proceed to the *dambwe*, and those who play no further active part may go and bathe, after which they repair to the *liunde*, where they rest and drink till noon. Meanwhile, the relations, accompanied by any other of the men who assisted in digging the grave or were present at the interment, have betaken themselves early to the banks of the stream where they bathed on the former occasion. The women who have worn *zisthambo*[1] burn them in a fire, and scatter the ashes. If they have indulged in sexual intercourse while wearing them, the *zisthambo* refuse to burn. Both sexes bathe separately as before, and all return to the house of the deceased, outside which the men shave each others' heads, as also do the women. About noon one or more *analiya* come from the *liunde* and dance in the *mzinda*. *Chadzunda* hobbles out, peers round the graveyard, and goes first to the house of the deceased to receive a *supo* from the widow and then to the house of the headman, where he sits on a chair while people come and give him *masupo* and beer. After this refreshment he dances in the *bwalo*, and then retreats to the *liunde* for a rest, returning to dance a second and third time before retiring finally to the *dambwe*. Then *kusipa maliro* dances for the last time, and is taken to the *dambwe* and burnt, and those who have handled him bathe. *Visudzo* again bring broken pots from the graveyard, and dance with them in the bush, singing "*Mbiya sodzoka*," and the *analiya* continue dancing for a while. At sunset the ceremonies are ended by the male relations of the deceased burning first the beer fence and then the house. The widow sleeps in someone else's house for a few weeks, until a new house has been built for her by her relations.

M 765 575 M [515] [302] [535] M [768]

5. *Funeral rites (Ngoni).*

The procedure described by Captain Rattray[2] in 1907 is still remembered by the old men; but the younger Angoni are inclined to follow the customs of the Achewa with certain modifications. For example, they place the corpse in a recess cut out from the bottom of the wall of the grave in order that it may not be soiled when the grave is filled in. They do not leave him any food, but place his spear and shield and one or two of his knives in the recess by his side. Part of his remaining property is deposited in the main shaft; but the sons always inherit the knives, except the *chipumbu* (knife for cutting meat), which falls to the head wife.

N 764 [177] N 428

On the second day after the death, the widows send children to cut *mpulupuluwa* grass, from which they weave *zisthambo* to bind on their heads. As long as the widows wear these *zisthambo*, they must abstain from sexual intercourse; if they fall from grace, they invariably remove the *zisthambo* first. They must also keep their hands behind their backs when walking abroad, and may only use one hand when gesticulating. They must refrain from conversation and ablution for two or three weeks, at the end of which they brew beer (known as *mau wa zisabidzo*) and invite a few friends to partake of it. Very often a widow's near female relations past the time of childbearing wear *zisthambo* and observe prohibitions in sympathy with her.

N 765 ● N [273]

[1] Mourning bands of plaited grass (see following section).
[2] "Some Folk Lore Songs and Stories in Chinyanja," pp. 98-99.

7: Hodgson G-5 (1926) 1933 FR5 Ngoni FR5 Maravi FR4

N 765 [262] On the second day, also, the *mwini malire* takes cows or a goat according to his means, and divides the flesh among the mourners. The bones may not be gnawed, as this would be considered equivalent to eating the dead man, but they are put into an *nguombo* basket and thrown away into the bush at the end of the feast.

M N [764] [177] On the third and fourth days the male relations surround the grave with a fence of *tambwe* grass known as *chilira*, which is sometimes plastered by the women with mud. The Achewa are now beginning to imitate this custom, and also that of wearing *sinthembo*. Both tribes plant *nkhadzi*[1] trees about the graves in order that the dead may have shade.

N 766 765 237 A chief is not buried in the common graveyard, but in the village just outside his hut, and a chair is sometimes placed inside the *chilira*. One of his senior relations kills a goat, and the new prospective chief ties a root along the handle and blade of a knife, with which he cuts a horizontal strip of skin round the quarters of a goat, and wears the strip for two or three months as a belt, the tail hanging down behind. With the same knife the widows cut off the false hoofs together with a small piece of adjacent skin, through which they thread a string, and then bind a false hoof on each wrist and wear them till the end of the period of mourning. The root must remain fastened to the knife throughout this period, at the end of which all are burnt together.

VIII.—Mental Characters.

1. *Reincarnation and Spirits (Chewa).*

M 769 [776] [622] [778] [262] *Mizimu* or spirits are invoked as intermediaries between man and God (*Chauta*), and each village contains a hut for the spirits of past chiefs, to whom prayers are generally made because they are powerful and because they are known to everybody. Some of the larger villages have two huts, one for the spirits of men and the other for the spirits of women. A man may also make offerings to the spirits of his own family in his own hut. When the green maize is ready for eating, the people may not taste it until their headman has taken a cob, cooked it in his house and placed it in the spirits' house, where he claps his hands and thanks the spirits for the crop. The cob, like other offerings to spirits, may be eaten next morning by children below the age of initiation.

M 775 If, as frequently happens, a traveller strays—as we should say, absentmindedly—when following a route which he knows quite well, it is the work of a spirit which has been annoyed by him. On one such occasion a police constable of mine, who had been sent to the neighbouring station while his child was ill, found himself wandering several times from the main road, and knew thereby that his child was dead, and that its spirit was troubling him because he should

[824] [1] *Nkhadzi*, euphorbia. These are evergreen, quickly propagated and long lived, and so they serve also as a sign to mark the grave long afterwards. In the Mlanje District the Anyanja and other tribes sometimes plant them in maize fields because they are supposed to be obnoxious to termites.

Livingstone, *loc. cit.*, p. 105, writes that in the Shire Highlands in 1859 they found all Mang'anja villages surrounded by an impenetrable hedge of poisonous euphorbia. He continues: "This tree casts a deep shade, which would render it difficult to bowmen to take aim at the villagers inside. The grass does not grow beneath it, and this may be the reason why it is so universally used, for when dry the grass would convey fire to huts inside; moreover, the hedge acts as a feeder to all flying sparks.